

here in the heartland, my body light  
as the birthday boy's

humming some lovely anthem as I walk  
from the windows hearing Pearly Desire  
so far ahead by deep stretch that the idle  
photo finish camera turns, and look:  
That's me, the one in the long black car  
with the motor running.

#### SOME SAY I RAN GUNS TO CUBAN REBELS

The other day I went down to the saddling  
paddock to return a book to my friend Darrell.  
When he saw me, he handed the tongue-tie  
to an assistant and walked over. We met  
at the white railing, my forehead into  
the secret space, his into the area  
marked Hopeful Anticipation on maps  
of Santa Anita.

He retrieved Laughing in the Hills.  
"Did you like it?" he asked softly so as  
not to disturb the big gelding circling  
behind him.  
"A lot."  
"Yea. That guy writes okay."

Just then a restless owner stamped and coughed  
so he said goodbye. It was then I noticed  
how the people around us had been leaning in  
their ears pink from strain, and I could  
hear what they heard: The Word. In code.

Tonight they will whisper about what goes  
on out there. They will be talking about  
me, the Man in the Satin Jacket, down to  
the lint and the secret compartment, not  
even betting for awhile, just watching  
them run, taking it easy, doing some  
light reading.

#### I'M AMAZED

As she was undressing, shyly  
she said, "You know, I don't have all that  
much experience."

I felt like I'd been chosen first  
for softball. But why? Why is love



homeopathic so that less is more  
flattering? The vagina does not wear out  
like brake lining. In fact, it keeps  
its comfy, Shriner grip pretty much forever.

Still, she's so pretty there by the window  
leaning forward to let her bra fall clear  
in a tender bombing raid on Pantyland  
with its sprawling suburbs of polyester  
Georgette.

"Close the blinds, Hon. The whole world  
is looking at your sweet ass."

"JUST IMAGINE THAT JESUS WERE WITH YOU"

-- my Sunday School teacher

What would you think today, Jesus, sitting with me  
in the Adults Only Arcade? Could you be comfortable  
breaking the 2-in-a-booth rule? What about those  
leading men longer than Russian novels, those  
starlets never alone, always a handyman popping  
into the shower, and those phone numbers on  
the tiny screen, each promising what we all desire  
more fervently every day: A Good Time.

I know it says in your favorite book not to spill  
one's seed on the ground, but how about on the door  
and walls? No one knows your secret life -- what  
you did on weekends and between miracles -- but  
everyone knows you understand how the heart  
can topple from loneliness and desire.

I believe if you were with me today, what a sensation,  
what a huge light in this place darker and smellier  
than Hitler's socks. Your sweetness would seep next  
door to Booth 26, bleaching the happy bathers off  
the screen, sending an angry patron storming out,  
the dew still on his brow, but happy somehow satisfied  
and -- like me -- feeling curiously blessed.

#### MISSING PERSONS

When Bill and Betty and I began to talk about  
them, we meant the fresh-faced choir directors  
and assistant pastors caught having affairs  
who vanished into some Protestant Siberia,